

## Storm Impact Update – July 23, 2016, 2:00 pm

Superior National Forest Crews, Lake and St. Louis County crews, and power company crews have been working hard since the storm to clear power lines, debris, accesses, roadways and portages. St. Louis County Search and Rescue, Lake and St. Louis County Sheriffs, and Forest Service personnel have mobilized resources to help.

### The following is a summary of post-storm conditions on the Forest today:

All major roads and recreation sites have been cleared on **Laurentian and LaCroix Ranger Districts**. Most roads are passable with some downed trees on the **Tofte, and Gunflint Ranger Districts**. **The Gunflint Trail is clear**.

On all of the access roads to wilderness entry points in the **Kawishiwi Ranger District** ONE emergency lane has been cleared in order to allow trapped campers to leave. Crews have NOT fully opened the roads. Power companies are still working to repair lines and there are some down. We've had reports of people driving the access roads too fast and this is endangering our crews and each other. Getting visitors INTO the wilderness is NOT an emergency.

While there are no area closures on the Superior National Forest at this time, Forest managers urge visitors to be aware that there are still many leaning trees and hanging branches that can easily fall. Saturated soils make otherwise stable trees prone to falling over. Consider these hazards and prevailing southwest winds when choosing a parking, picnic, or camping site.

### Additional information for the Kawishiwi Ranger District:

Crews worked on the North Grassy and Snowbank Lake access roads today. There is also logging traffic on the North Grassy Road and power company trucks working on both roads.

Visitors are encouraged to consider alternatives to Mudro and Snowbank Wilderness entry points in order to avoid potentially slow-going with long waits on these roads due to one-lane access and heavy traffic. Traffic leaving the road and crews working the road have priority.

A July 2016 Storm Damage Management Team has been working to assess the situation across the District. Here are the conditions as we know them today:

- **Snowbank Area:** the portages from Snowbank into Disappointment and Disappointment to Parent were made passable yesterday. Today work focused on the Parent to Snowbank Portage. The condition of portages to the north are either very rough, impassable or unknown at this time. Heavy impacts are believed to be as far east as Thomas and Frasier Lakes.
- **Lake One Area:** Portages into Lake Two are passable. Conditions beyond are unknown.
- Access into **Ojibway:** Passable but may be one lane. The North Kawishiwi River is believed to have been heavily impacted.
- **Farm Lake, Birch, and White Iron** roads and campsites are south of the largest impacts but had scattered damage. Roads are mostly passable. The South Kawishiwi and Birch Lake Campgrounds had little damage and are open.
- **Mudro** entry point: One emergency lane cut on the North Grassy Road. Logging Traffic is also using this one lane road. Forest Service crews are working this road today, attempting to widen it. Travel is not advised but if a group is going in, they must travel very slowly and expect waits. Clearing crews and traffic exiting the North Grassy Road out to the Echo Trail have priority.

- The **Fenske Lake** Campground was impacted and remains open. Portages on the **Circle Route** are being cleared. Currently portages through the Slettens are cleared. The portage into Tee should be cleared today. Camping is not recommended on Bass, High, Dry, and Low Lakes at this time. Hiking the **Bass Lake Trail** may be hazardous. We simply have not been able to assess campsites and the trail yet for hazardous trees.
- **Burntside/Crab Lake**: The Van Vac access was hard hit but is now passable. Downed power lines were repaired. The Passi Road was impacted but is now passable. The Crab Lake portage was made passable yesterday. Campers report portages to the west and to the north of Crab Lake as rough but passable. Slim and Little Rice Lakes were impacted. The **North Arm and Slim Lake** Access roads were impacted and are now passable. The portage into Slim has been cleared. Portages and campsites beyond Slim are being assessed today.
- **Fall and west Basswood**: Newton and Pipestone portages are passable. Campsites on the western end of Basswood are being checked today for storm damage.
- **Moose Lake Road, eastern Basswood**: The Moose Lake Road is passable but there are still low power lines across the road. Power company trucks and Forest Service crews are working on the road. Basswood and Moose Chain campsites have not been assessed yet for hazardous trees. Prairie Portage is passable. Portages into Sucker, Birch, and Ensign may be difficult but are passable. Portages farther east seem to have been less affected.

We ask returning BWCAW visitors who have updated information, to please email or call the Kawishiwi Ranger District Office.

If you called us concerning people who were out in the woods during the storm, please call when you have heard from them.

#### **Some safety tips:**

- ✓ Be prepared!
- ✓ Understand that search and rescue takes longer in the backcountry and wilderness than in an urban setting. Also, cell phones do not work in many parts of the BWCAW and other areas on the Forest.
- ✓ Leave a trip itinerary outlining your travel plans with someone at home and remember to check in with them when you return safely. The Forest Service does not automatically initiate searches if a group doesn't leave as planned. If someone is concerned because you are late returning from your trip, they should contact the county sheriff's office.
- ✓ Keep up-to-date with the latest weather forecast.